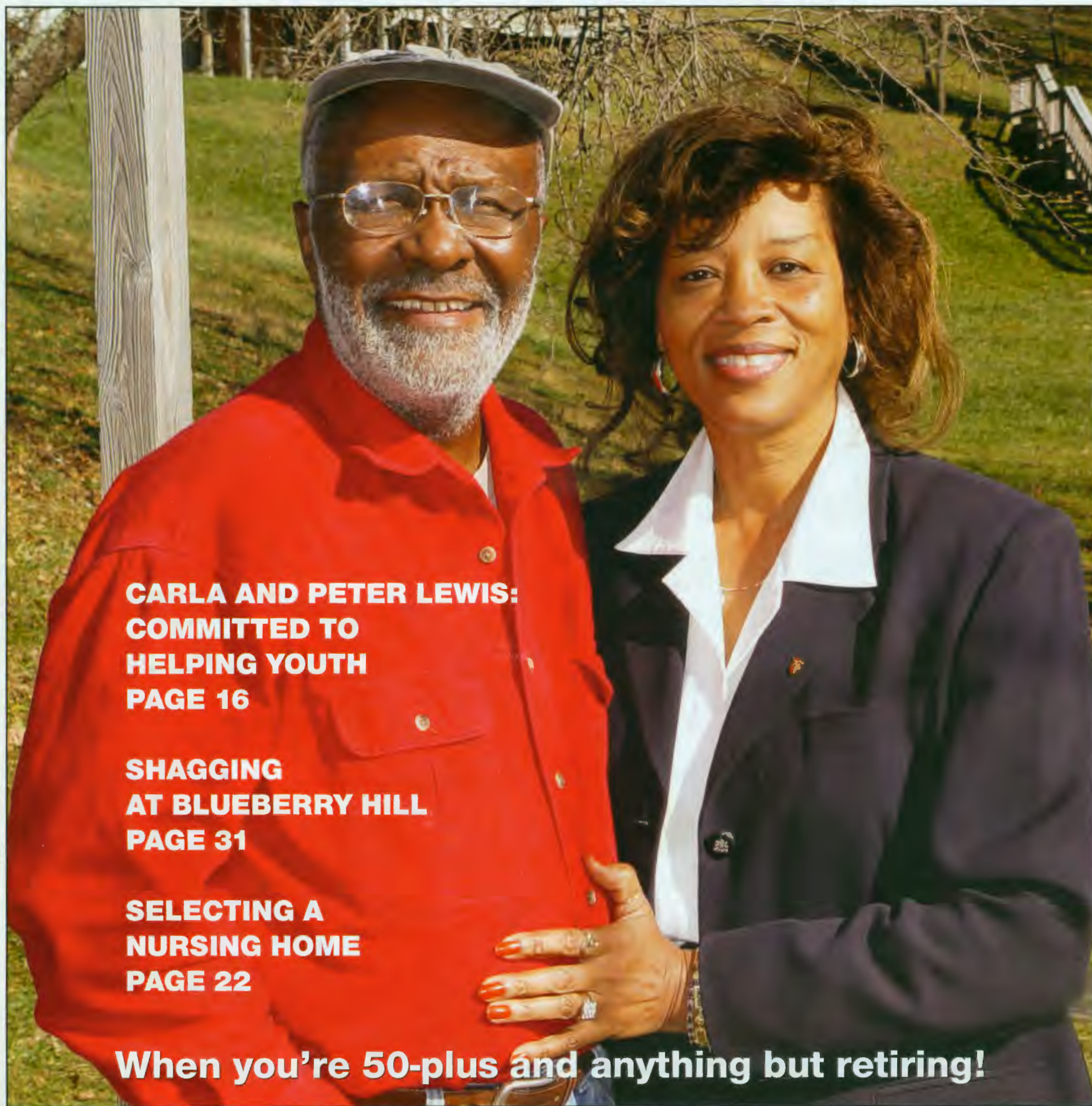


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**CARLA AND PETER LEWIS:
COMMITTED TO
HELPING YOUTH
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**SHAGGING
AT BLUEBERRY HILL
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**SELECTING A
NURSING HOME
PAGE 22**

When you're 50-plus and anything but retiring!

Lewises Give New Meaning to 'Extended Family'

By DENISE ALLEN MEMBRENO

Carla and Peter Lewis have a simple recipe for success: respect, love and friendship mixed with a lot of hard work. This recipe has created a happy marriage, productive careers and fulfilling lives.

They say their recipe can help achieve just about any goal you set, and they pass it along to the thousands of children they call their own. Carla works with children through her job as the librarian at Gainsboro Library in Roanoke. Peter is a retired educator who reaches children through Apple Ridge Farm, an educational and fun retreat for inner city kids.

It takes a village...

The African proverb "It takes a whole village to raise a child" has become fashionable to say but it was a reality for Carla and Peter Lewis.

Carla grew up in Lisbon, a rural North Carolina town. Washington, D.C., was home for Peter. Despite the differences in their origins, both felt the love of their communities.

"The whole community had expectations for you whether your parents were professionals or post office workers, day laborers, whatever," says Peter of his childhood in the Adams Morgan section of D.C. "Everybody had the same dreams for their kids."

Carla was one of eight children; all of whom went to college.



Carla and Peter like to go antiquing for recreation and to find items for their shops

Photos by Denise Allen Membreno

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Her father was a farmer, and her mother a missionary. At one time, they had three kids in college.

When Carla was a student assistant at Virginia Union University's library, Marion Penn mentored her. "Miss Penn would order lunch and tell me if I would go get it that she would treat me, too," remembers Carla. "She must have known that I hadn't eaten since breakfast but that was her way of looking after me."

Carla says she was determined to help pay for her tuition and worked all through school to ease the burden on her parents.

When she graduated from college and moved to Roanoke, Carla found other mentors.

"When I came to Roanoke to visit the Gainsboro Library where I would be working, I was accompanied by Emily Keyser, the assistant director of library services," recalls Carla. "At the library, Ms. Keyser asked if I had found a place to live. Immediately, Mrs. Louise Bowling, the assistant librarian, offered her home to me."

The Bowling family is still a part of Carla's extended family.

Both of Peter's parents were educators, but an aunt and uncle also had a great impact on his life. For 10 years, he spent summers and many holidays at their Fauquier County dairy farm. This experience would shape his life in ways he never expected, he says.

On a Mission

Peter started his career as a teacher in D.C., following in his parents footsteps.

"I was working with kids some of who were very troubled. I



Carla Lewis has been librarian at Gainsboro for nearly 33 years

started taking them to the country to my aunt's farm, and I saw street thugs just melt when they were on the farm."

He says his aunt's southern hospitality and the fresh air transformed these teenage tough guys into wood nymphs. "I thought if that can reduce these kids who wouldn't show respect to a police man, to kids who were just wide eyed, this country experience that I'd been taking for granted all these years is something special, and I need to bottle it."

Peter had found the path he needed to walk. He and his first wife started looking for farms in Virginia and, in 1975, they fell in love with Apple Ridge Farm in Floyd County.

They moved to Copper Hill, and Peter went to work for Roanoke City Schools. In 1986, he helped found an alternative education program that is now known as the Noel C. Taylor Academy. But Apple Ridge is his passion, and now that he's retired from the school system, it's his fulltime job.

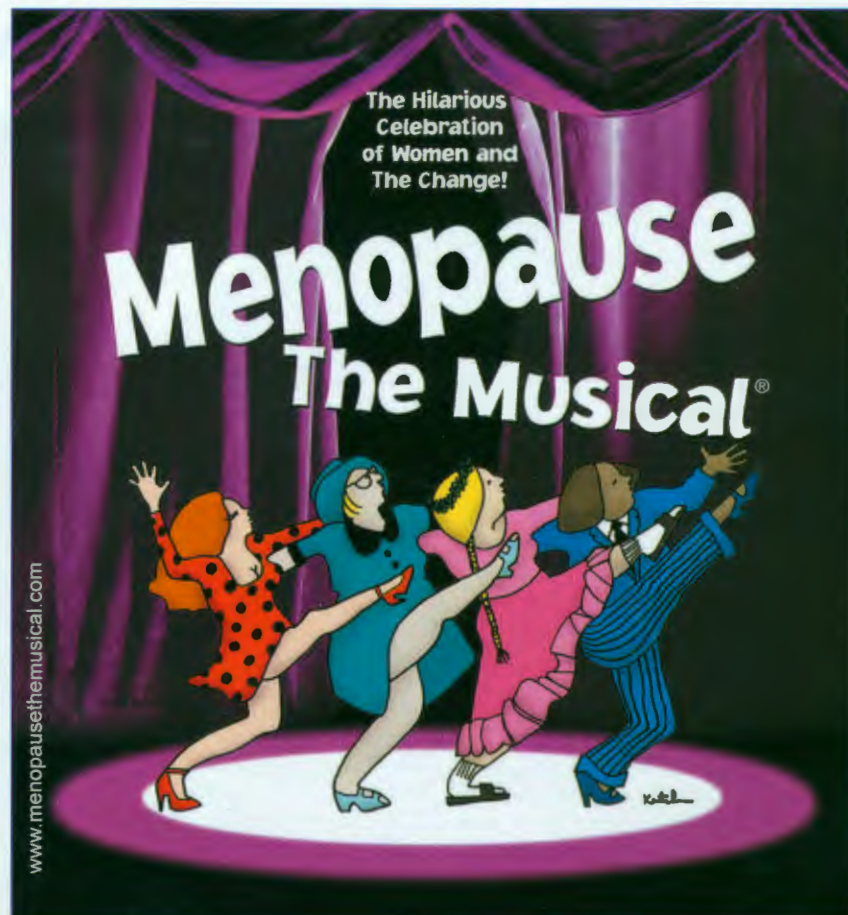
The first group of students came to nonprofit academic camp and retreat in 1976. Last summer, 400 youngsters attended an academic camp at Apple Ridge. Throughout the year, some 2,000 students visit its Environmental Education Center, which includes the new James A. Meador Natural Science Building.

Apple Ridge also runs a school year reading program in Roanoke.

Apple Ridge Farm's mission is to provide enriching educational and outdoor opportunities to less fortunate children.

"We're not just a destination; we're a medium, a magic carpet that seeks to show kids a slice of the world through our educa-

—Please see COVER STORY page 24



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COVER STORY – continued from page 17

tional programs," Peter says.

Carla studied to be a teacher and put those skills to use at the Gainsboro Library where she has worked for nearly 33 years. She is one of only three librarians to work at the historic library in its 63-year history.

The library is the hub of one of Roanoke's oldest communities. It's a busy spot offering story time for preschool children, homework help to students and adult programs as well. A popular program is the monthly Blues Night when local musicians perform.

But Carla's mission is helping the children. Since coming to Roanoke in 1973 she has nurtured thousands of children both from the neighborhood and Roanoke Catholic Schools.

"I like to see a child grow. I like to take them where they are and show them they can go anywhere through reading."

"You can be what you want to be but there are conditions. And some of the conditions are you have to be disciplined. You have to read. You have to be mannerly. You have to respect people."

A Spark Develops

Carla and Peter have known each other for more than 30 years. Both place a high priority on community service. Both put children



Apple Ridge Farm in Floyd County was founded by Peter Lewis as an activities and educational center for innercity children

first, their own and the many they "adopt" through their work.

They met in the late 1970s while volunteering for an organization that sponsored African American History Month celebrations. Both were married to others at the time.

Then in the fall of 1996, a spark developed. Carla had been divorced for 10 years, and Peter had been single for a year.

"I came calling on Miss Carla and was very tentative because I'd known her for so long and had a great deal of respect for her so I was shy about approaching her," recalls Peter. "Our first date was up at Peaks of Otter, and our second date was here and I cooked for her and told her to sit in front of the fireplace."

They married five months later and have been going strong for nearly nine years.

"He listens to me," says Carla. "He's home at night. It's such a love and respect relationship we have for each other and if I want to do something he makes sure I get it done."

Sometimes they stay at the house in Roanoke; sometimes they

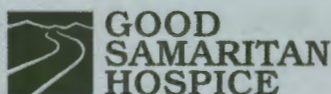


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stay at the farm, often negotiating who will make the drive to be with the other, Carla says.

The give-and-take of their relationship extends to how they share their churches and even their business cards.

They attend Bible study at Carla's church, Sweet Union Baptist, and alternate Sunday services at Sweet Union and Peter's church, Loudon Avenue Christian.

The couple also shares a love of antiques and can spend seven hours driving from Roanoke to Richmond stopping at yard sales along the way. Jaunts to Bedford, Buchanan and Christiansburg also are popular and travel is always off the interstate on routes such as U.S. 11 and 460.

Each operates an antique shop at Apple Ridge Farm, although Peter says his Trading Post Collectibles is more like a museum than a shop because he doesn't care if he sells anything or not. Carla runs Auntie's Attic, an antiques boutique that includes clothing.

Until they retire, the shops are open by appointment "or chance," Peter says.

They also just enjoy riding in Peter's white 1988 Mustang convertible, which he bought after dreaming about a sports car he had as a youth.

"Carla said buy a car if you want it; you deserve it," Peter says.

He's also a member of The Mustang Car Club.

Passing it On

Carla, 56, and Peter, 62, have three sons from their previous mar-

riages and are grandparents to five grandsons. They try to spend at least one day a week with the grandchildren, playing, reading and passing along family and African American history. It's something they've done for decades for others and in the process have acquired an enormous extended family.

"Sometimes we're out to dinner, and a young person or adult will come up, and I'll say 'That's one of my babies,' and Peter will say, 'No, that's one of my babies,' and we'll go back and forth, and the child is just beaming," says Carla.

"And the child may be 30 years old," adds Peter. "What we're trying to do in our own small way is to get kids to really take a look at who they are, where they want to go and that there are concrete steps they can take to get there."

Peter says the work they do is to honor the friends, family, teachers and mentors that helped them throughout their lives. "People took time with us to have high expectations and to nurture us and they did that for children not their own and so what our deal is, is to think that we can provide that same nurturing experience for children not our own as well as our own."

"We also feel we're standing on the shoulders of others so we have to give back," says Carla. "If someone didn't help me when I was in college, if someone didn't help me when I graduated from college and I was away from home I don't know where I'd be. I have to give back because it was given to me. I have to pass it along."

Continued from BOTETOUR TRAVEL page 13

BOTETOUR Travel & Tours

May 14- 2006: "Girls Night Out" weekend in America's Little Switzerland in Jim Thorpe, PA (the gateway to the Pocono Mtns.)- includes transportation, 2 nights stay at the Inn at Jim Thorpe, 1 hour body massage, hot towel face massage, special discounts at various shops, some meals & a special comedy show just for the ladies!- from \$499 ppdo.

June 9-10, 2006: "Are We There Yet?" a light hearted musical/comedy about family at the Wayside Theatre- includes transportation, show ticket & overnight stay at the Hotel Strasburg & full hot breakfast. \$149 pp

June 16-20, 2006: Niagara Falls, Toronto & Niagara on the Lake Includes roundtrip transportation, 4 nights lodging at the Holiday Inn by the Falls, a short tour of the Niagara, time at Niagara on the Lake & 1 day exploring Toronto.- from \$499 ppdo.

June 28, 2006: "West Side Story" at the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre- includes transportation, lunch & show ticket-\$65 pp.

July 6-9, 2006: Yankees Baseball at Yankee Stadium Includes roundtrip transportation, 3 nights lodging at the Holiday Inn Harmon Meadows, & choice of how many ball games you wish to attend- from \$459 ppdo

August 12-13, 2006: "The Smell of the Kill" comedy at the Wayside Theatre- includes transportation, show ticket & overnight stay at the Hotel Strasburg & full hot breakfast. \$149 pp.

October 4, 2006: "Oklahoma!" at the Wohlfahrt Haus Dinner Theatre- includes transportation, lunch & show ticket-\$65 pp.

October 12-15, 2006: Niagara Falls, Canada Includes transportation, a short tour of the Niagara area, part of a day at Niagara on the Lake & 3 nights lodging at the beautiful Embassy Suites with rooms overlooking the Falls.- from \$499 ppdo.

Cruises for 2005-2006

March 11-18, 2006: Western Caribbean cruise from Charleston, SC - Grand Cayman, Cozumel & Key West- from \$769 ppdo inside

April 15-22, 2006: Spring Break cruise going to the Western Caribbean from Charleston, SC- Grand Cayman, Cozumel & Key West- from \$829 ppdo inside

May 12-21, 2006: Hawaiian cruise & stay on the Pride of Aloha Includes cruise, 2 nights pre cruise lodging in Honolulu, transfers & all meals on board ship.-from \$1859 ppdo inside with airfare from Roanoke, VA

June 10 -12, 2006: 2 day cruise to "nowhere" from Norfolk on the Carnival Victory- from \$370 ppdo inside- call for availability

June 13-21, 2006: Alaskan cruise on the Carnival Spirit with optional post cruise land/rail package - includes cruise, 1 nights lodging Vancouver & all meals on board ship- from \$1899 ppdo inside with roundtrip air from Roanoke, VA.

June 24-July 6, 2006: Grand Mediterranean cruise on the Carnival Liberty from Rome Visiting Naples Italy, Venice Italy, Dubrovnik Croatia, Messina Sicily Italy, Barcelona Spain, Cannes France & Livorno Italy.-from \$1639 ppdo inside

August 27- September 3, 2006: Alaskan cruise on the Norwegian Star Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan & Victoria- from \$1598 ppdo inside with airfare from Roanoke, VA- \$274 3rd & 4th person inside rate!

October 7-17, 2006: Fall Foliage Cruise on the Holland America ms Maasdam- departing from Montreal Quebec stopping in Quebec City Quebec, Charlottetown Prince Edward, Sydney Nova Scotia, Halifax Nova Scotia, Bar Harbor Maine, Boston Massachusetts, Oak Bluffs Martha's Vineyard & arriving in Norfolk, VA- from \$1679 ppdo inside.

October 14-16, 2006: 2 day cruise to "nowhere" from Norfolk, VA on the Carnival Victory- from \$699 ppdo inside- call for availability

October 17-22, 2006: Bahamas cruise from Charleston, SC on the Carnival Victory- visiting Freeport & Nassau- from \$625 ppdo inside- \$349 3rd & 4th person inside rate!

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